

**DRAFT**  
**NORTHEASTERN GREAT BASIN**  
**RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 5, 2000**  
**Ely, NV**

**Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:**

Ms. Kathy Ataman	(2) Archeologic & History
Ms. Patsy Tomera	(3) Public At Large
Mr. Brent Eldridge	(3) Local Government
Mr. Vincent Garcia	(3) Native American
Mr. Hudson Glimp	(3) Academic
Mr. Bill Upton, Chairman	(1) Mining
Ms. Teresa Conner	(1) Mining
Mr. Bob Edwards	(1) Transportation & ROW
Mr. Robert McGinty	(2) Environmental
Mr. Jon Muller	(2) Recreation

**Bureau of Land Management Representatives Present:**

Mr. Curtis Tucker	Ely Field Office
Ms. Sue Howle	Ely Field Office
Ms. Alicia Gibson	Ely Field Office
Mr. Jerry Smith	Battle Mountain Field Office
Ms. Jo Simpson	Nevada State Office
Mr. Bill Dunn	Ely Field Office
Mr. Clinton Oke	Elko Field Office
Mr. Gene Kolkman	Ely Field Office
Mr. Eric Luse	Ely Field Office
Ms. Virginia Aime	Ely Field Office
Ms. Helen Hankins	Elko Field Office
Mr. Jeff Weeks	Battle Mountain Field Office

**Other Attendees:**

Mr. Paul Scheidig	Nevada Mining Association
Mr. Bob Wilson	University of Nevada at Reno, Cooperative Extension
Mr. Jerry Green	United States Forest Service
Mr. Bill Wilson	Public Land Users Advisory Committee

Note to readers: A copy of each attachment listed in the text of, and at the end of these minutes is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Ely Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Ms. Sue Howle at (775) 289-1873.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Upton. Welcome of members and guests

followed. Curtis Tucker introduced Sue Howle who will be the new BLM Liaison for the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council.

**Minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were reviewed.**

**Motion was made to accept by Hudson Glimp, seconded by Teresa Conner. All in favor.**

## I. MINING:

Toxic Release Inventory(TRI)-Presentation by Paul Scheidig, Nevada Mining Association

TRI has been very good for the nation in terms of understanding toxic waste and its effect on a community level, however it has mostly affected manufacturers. In the early 1980s the Community Right to Know Act established a system that afforded people to understand what kinds of toxic materials were present in their communities. The system never dealt with risk or environmental consequences and targeted only companies and manufacturers. The system allowed for identification of toxic materials on site and how they were released into the environment, whether by water, air or soil. TRI inspired manufacturers to look for alternatives for toxic substances and alternate methodologies, thereby reducing the quantity and number of toxic releases over the last decade.

In 1998, EPA added seven new industries to the TRI, one of which is mining. The numbers from 1998 are finally being released to the public. In 1997 Nevada had 4 million pounds of toxic releases to the environment, placing Nevada in the 44<sup>th</sup> position out of the 50 states. With the addition of mining, Nevada will place #1 in the nation for toxic release. Nevada will go from 4 million pounds in 1997 to 1.3 billion pounds in 1998.

98 to 99% of the “billion” numbers reported for Nevada are related to what is naturally occurring in waste rock and the ore body rock. Other than some acids, nitrates and cyanide there is very little in the way of toxic materials that is added or used in the process of mining. There are things that the mining industry will have to be more accountable for, however the numbers may paint a picture of Nevada that is misleading.

Numbers will be aggregated on a statewide basis, however, they can be aggregated on a regional basis. Each state will identify by sector the top 10 polluters in that sector.

Many of the environmental groups are trying to use these numbers to mislead the public as to the real situation.

If anyone is interested in an information packet concerning TRI, please let Bill Upton know and one will be made available to you.

3809 Mining Regulations-Update by Helen Hankins, Field Manager-Elko District BLM

The BLM task force has drafted a preliminary final version of the regulations. They are writing responses to the public comments that were received regarding the draft version. These comments will go into the preamble of the regulations. The target date for completion of final draft, including preamble language, is approximately one week away. It will then be consolidated by the Washington Office then the package will be redistributed to the team for review. They are hoping there will be time for the Field Offices to review the package, however, they do not have clearance from the DOI for that to happen. It is expected that the regulations will go to the Office of National Budget by the first of August for review and are hoping to have these regulations published in the Federal Register sometime in October.

The National Academy of Science (NAS) report and public comments concerning the NAS report were taken into consideration in the final draft.

The 3809 team consists entirely of DOI employees or affiliates. There are no members of the mining industry or environmental groups on the team.

## II. GREAT BASIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE:

Presentation-Clinton Oke, Elko Field Office-BLM  
(Attachments 1 & 2-“The Great Basin: Healing the Land” and powerpoint presentation)

This initiative ties together the National Wild Horse Strategy, the Nevada Wild Horse Tactical Plan, the Sage Grouse issue, Noxious Weeds, and Fire Recovery. This initiative gives us an opportunity to do land management on the ground in a big way where perhaps we are not accomplishing as much as we need to.

The best way to support the BLM in this restoration initiative is to encourage Congress to increase the budget for this plan. Currently Nevada BLM has \$1.00/acre to manage the land. None of the Southern Nevada Land Sale will be applied to this initiative.

## III. WILD HORSE & BURRO:

National Wild Horse & Burro Strategy-Presentation by Jeff Weeks  
Associate Field Manager, Battle Mountain BLM  
(Attachment 3)

Cost Example: It costs approximately \$1500.00 to remove a horse from public lands and have it adopted. To remove 500 horses it would cost approximately \$750,000.00 a year. Added to that expense is the cost of performing census and any other program related items. This would require at least \$1,000,000.00 per year from now on in order to maintain an acceptable level within the Ely District alone. (Dependent on achieving AML to begin with)

Point to remember: The money needed to implement this plan is not guaranteed.

Wild Horse & Burro Standards & Guidelines-Update by Jo Simpson, Nevada State Office

## BLM

Nevada State BLM Office will be issuing an Instruction Memorandum to the Nevada BLM Field Offices within the next few weeks. Each office will look at the Standards & Guidelines developed by the NEGBRAC and determine whether their own Land Use Plans are in compliance with the Guidelines. After a public notification, all comments, along with the Guidelines, will be sent to the Nevada State BLM Director where they will be evaluated and hopefully approved. As yet it has not been determined how any recommendations for new or changes to Standards will be handled. Hopefully the Standards & Guidelines will be signed by early summer.

**Public Comment Period-no comments at this time.**

### IV. SAGE GROUSE:

Sagebrush Steppe-Overview by Helen Hankins, Field Manager-Elko BLM

There are some 20 species at risk in the Sagebrush Community which need to be considered in our efforts. There will be some sort of petition to have Sage Grouse listed this summer or early fall. It is not known at this time whether the request will be for a Western-wide listing or on a state by state basis. We know that there has been significant degradation of the Sage Grouse habitat in Nevada over the last 20 or 30 years. Perhaps as much as 50% of their habitat has been destroyed or degraded.

Approximately one year ago BLM Nevada started talking about the need to be proactive in their approach. On a statewide basis BLM has put together a strategy on how they want to approach Fish & Wildlife Service at the time the petition is received. BLM wants to have a statewide conservation plan which is an umbrella document that will include the local strategies developed by each of the Field Offices allowing for different prescriptions dependent on the area.

In addition to the design for a statewide plan, the BLM is in the process of viewing the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Guidelines. This is a group of biologists that have put together guidelines and recommendations for the management of Sage Grouse and related species. BLM Nevada is in the process of reviewing those guidelines and making recommendations back to WAFWA and defining which of the guidelines will be adopted by BLM Nevada. It is anticipated that BLM Nevada will have a product out to the public within the next two or three weeks. In addition, each BLM Field Office has been asked to look at what proactive steps have been accomplished to date and to lay out a strategy on how to deal with Sage Grouse and related species until the Fish & Wildlife Service receives a petition and makes a decision on how they are going to deal with that petition.

There have been interagency discussions with the US Forest Service, Nevada Division of

Wildlife (NDOW) and BLM Nevada in an effort to find synchronization in their plans. It is hoped there will be some closure on what NDOW is doing statewide and how that relates to what BLM Nevada is doing in the very near future.

The Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group has been working on the Sage Grouse issue. Over the last several months, they have been evaluating 27 issues they feel impact Sage Grouse. They are also hoping to do some experimental treatments over the next year or so on manipulation of vegetation. They are expecting to have a draft plan within the next year.

Jerry Smith, Field Manager Battle Mountain BLM-Looking at low populations in Lander and Eureka Counties therefore community based activities are difficult. Battle Mountain BLM is trying to set up a field meeting for the counties and interested public to look at some Sage Grouse habitat. The Battle Mountain BLM is interested in having a Technical Review Team (TRT) made up of RAC members and BLM employees to look at developing a conservation plan for Eureka and Lander Counties. Hopefully they will have a team organized by early summer.

Gene Kolkman, Field Manager Ely BLM-Taking a two-pronged approach. We're treating the landscape level on an equal footing as the wildlife. We're preparing for a discussion with the community at large on what the landscape should look like. The first meeting will take place in June. These discussions will form the groundwork about how we want these landscapes to look, how to make them naturally resilient and how to restore these areas to fundamental ecological health. From there we will talk about specific species. Ely BLM is working with grazing permits, Off Highway Vehicle use and Fire Management Plans to preserve and protect existing Wildlife habitat and to encourage the right kind of vegetative growth to increase that habitat.

Hudson Glimp, UNR College of Agriculture-Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the University of Nevada Reno have a collaborative agreement in concert with the Nevada BLM which has an underlying theme of showing everyone how the Great Basin Restoration Initiative should work. They plan to accomplish this by starting at the landscape level.

Gene Kolkman-It is the hope of the Ely BLM that within the next five years we'll have a public consensus on the overall desired plant community composition, which will enable us to apply science and management to move towards our goals and objectives and put us in a position to deal with Sage Grouse, other wildlife and water quality issues.

Hudson Glimp-There are three driving issues the Elk Foundation and UNR are completely supportive of: Community Based Partnerships, private landowners involvement, and must be right for the ecosystem.

**Hudson Glimp made a motion that the NEGBRAC form a Sub-Group to assist Lander and Eureka Counties to develop a Sage Grouse Habitat Management Plan and that he serve as the liaison member of that Sub-Group. Seconded by Brent Eldridge, all in favor.**

## V. LAND HEALTH STANDARDS:

Information by Helen Hankins, Field Manager-Elko BLM

Nevada BLM was given direction approximately one year ago to develop Land Health Standards for all of their programs that parallel Standards which have been developed by the local RAC. Most recently, the Nevada BLM Districts received an Instruction Memorandum, stating that since they were reviewing their Land Use Plans, they should evaluate whether or not they could incorporate whatever Standards had been written by the local RAC, in this case being the Rangeland Standards, into Land Use Plans for other programs.

In Nevada there are eleven Land Use Plans for which this process will be utilized beginning with Fiscal Year 1999 and ending with Fiscal Year 2002. Elko District BLM is currently evaluating the Elko Resource Management Plan which covers the west half of the Elko District. They have a deadline of September 30, 1999. If they encounter areas of conflict, their Land Use plan may need to be amended. If that happens it will not be worked on until next year, however, they are not anticipating any conflicts at this time.

Jerry Smith-This Instruction Memorandum came out as an unfunded mandate to the Field Offices. Every Land Use Plan is supposed to be evaluated every five years. At this time it is not on our workload. We do not have the manpower to accomplish these tasks, however, we hope that we will be able to accomplish this next year.

## VI. OHV STRATEGY PLAN:

Information/Decision by Helen Hankins, Field Manager-Elko BLM

(Attachment 4)

The BLM will ask the RAC members at the end of Helen's remarks whether or not they will be willing to host a series of public meetings, between mid-June and the end of August in the NEGBRAC area to solicit the public's interest, concerns, ideas and solutions relative to Off Highway Vehicle use on Public Lands in the three BLM Districts in this area. Communities and dates to be suggested by the local BLM Field Offices.

As mentioned earlier most of BLM's Land Use Plans are fifteen to twenty years old. At the time these plans were developed many things were different. Population and the rate at which the population increased was less, the demographics of Public Land Users was different and the kinds of things they did on Public Lands was different. Today there are more types and quantities of OHVs and they have a capability of going farther and on rougher terrain than ever before. When you add all of these things together, particularly in certain areas of the country, it has created a growing national concern about the impact on resources. Not only soil and riparian areas, but also the visual component, the impact on wildlife and threatened and endangered species, etc. Therefore, one of the reasons for the public meetings will be to determine the resource concerns of the public relative to Off-Highway Vehicles.

The second issue is what we're calling Land Use concerns. One of the greatest values of

Public Lands, is access. People want to be able to use their Public Lands for whatever type of recreation. Therefore, one of the other things the BLM wants to know is what kind of land uses do people want to see and are there areas where they don't want to see Off-Highway Vehicle use or where they want to see that use managed differently or potentially limited.

BLM intends to use the information gathered at these meetings to develop a National Strategy for management of Off-Highway Vehicle use. It is also BLM's intention that this not be a top-down exercise. That each area develop what makes sense locally and then steps be taken in all the BLM offices to implement the recommendations whether that means a Land Use Plan Amendment or some other action.

This will not affect RS2477 which is a part of the 1866 mining law that had to do with peoples rights of access across Public Land. Under those provisions if a citizen could establish historic use of a road or a trail, they could claim a right to access that road or trail.

**Brent Eldridge moved that the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council host the information gathering meetings on OHV use for their area of Public Lands. Seconded by Jon Muller-all in favor.**

## VII. FIELD MANAGERS REPORTS:

### **Helen Hankins, Field Manager-Elko BLM**

(Attachment 5)

Helen presented Curtis Tucker with a Cash Award for all of his hard work associated with the NEGBRAC.

### **Jerry Smith, Field Manager-Battle Mountain BLM**

(Attachment 6)

The Diamond Decision was issued. There were some appeals. All permittees have withdrawn their appeals except one and we do not see that appeal being withdrawn. One environmental organization withdrew their appeal and right now Eureka County has appealed. The next big phase in the Diamond's once all appeals are resolved is implementation.

Jeff Weeks, Associate Field Manager Battle Mountain BLM-One of the things discussed at the last NEGBRAC meeting was the research proposal the Battle Mountain Field Office has been working on with the Gund Ranch which is owned and operated by the University of Nevada, Reno. The last signature was obtained yesterday and that project will be moving ahead. They will start collecting baseline data in June at which time they will be able to determine whether or not there was enough rain and seed germination to be able to implement the agreed upon proposal.

Jerry also wanted to let everyone know that if the weather predictions the BLM is receiving

are accurate, we could expect a very severe Fire Season again this year. Battle Mountain BLM has brought their engines on one month early because of these predictions.

**Bill Dunn, Fire Management Officer-Ely BLM**

(Attachment 7)

In 1996 all Federal Agencies were given direction to develop fire plans that would preserve and protect resources as well as to allow fire to act as naturally as possible. An Interagency Technical Review Team was formed in 1997 to develop a Fire Plan for all lands within the Ely District. This team was made up of representatives from the County, State, Federal Agencies and the private sector (UNR). The TRT was charged with prioritizing polygons (dividing the District into different areas with different strategies and objectives).

A plan for the Snake Range was done in October of 1998. The plan for the entire District was done recently and is currently out for public review. This plan takes many things into consideration, including Sage Grouse. The Fire Plan allows for “full suppression” to “let it burn” in order to achieve the BLM’s objectives on the land. We expect to sign off on this plan in about two weeks.

**Gene Kolkman, Field Manager-Ely BLM**

(Attachment 8)

Jo Simpson-There will be three public meetings for comments on the Great Basin Restoration Initiative. They are tentatively set up for Ely, Elko and somewhere in the Reno/Carson/Falon area.

**Public Comment Period-no comments**

The NEGBRAC is planning a tour of the Tosawihi Quarries sometime in September.

The next meeting of the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council will be in Elko on Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Patsy Tomera moved that the meeting be adjourned, it was seconded. All in favor.**